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11 JUL 1963

JCS and NRO Declassification/Release Instructions on File

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Deputy Director (Research)

SUBJECT : Proposed D/NRO-JCS/JRC Agreement
Dated 8 July 1963

1. The latest proposal from DOD and NRO on this topic seems to have met only one of the criteria for revision of the earlier proposals as expressed by the DCI in his 11 June 1963 letter to the Deputy Secretary of Defense. That is that the instant paper is in fact shorter and at least on the surface less elaborate. It is by no means the sort of "simplest form of agreement" which the Director felt would be quite adequate to serve the avowed purpose of such an agreement. It was not the Director's intention that the NRO denied territory overflight programs and the DOD (JRC) peripheral mission activities be combined as a single entity as would be possible under a literal interpretation of the latest proposal.

2. If the concern of DOD and JCS centers solely on the requirement that NRO and DOD missions are properly coordinated, then the proposed agreement is entirely inappropriate. There are in being procedures and well defined understandings between the NRO (CIA operations element) and the JRC under which the JCS is kept fully aware of NRO overflight activities on a very current basis. If there is JCS concern over certain high-level policy implications in these matters, then as the Director suggested JCS could have a representative at the Special Group meetings when these topics are being discussed.

3. With regard to that portion of the paper which deals with the transfer of NRO assets to the DOD during periods of war or tension there is an emergency war plan operations order, to which CIA and SAC have agreed, which facilitates

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Page Two

such action. The transfers of CIA U-2's to SAC on two recent occasions in the Cuban situation are examples that the transfer can be accomplished smoothly once a decision is reached. There is no reason to think that the same procedures will not apply equally effectively in the OXCART Program.

4. With regard to paragraph 4, it is not at all clear how the JRC by assuming "appropriate staff duties for the D/NRO" will in any way improve "technical and operational coordination" or the "technical and planning support" mechanics which are now in being. The existing CIA and USAF relationship within the framework of the NRO is quite adequate. To inject the JRC into these functions could only serve to complicate and encumber what are now quite workable methods. The need for an interface between NRO and JCS is obvious and can be effectuated through appropriate coordination between these elements and via the JRC if this is the JCS desire; however, there is a vast difference between mere coordination and exchange of appropriate information and the actual introduction of the JRC into the NRO as an operating entity.

5. In summation, it is difficult to find a single stated objective or purpose of this paper which is not in fact satisfied by existing methods and procedures. This paper can only be interpreted as a further attempt by the JCS to absorb those responsibilities and prerogatives relating to operational control of reconnaissance programs now exercised by the CIA within the framework of the NRO.

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JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.
Deputy Assistant Director
(Special Activities)

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